**Rough Outline for Research Product 1 - Persuasive Paper**

**Thesis:** When engaging in read-aloud activities with students, teachers should instigate group discussions both before and after reading for reflection to stimulate the students’ minds.

**Important Background:**

By the end of 3rd grade, many children [in Philadelphia and elsewhere] are already reading below their required grade level. Schools and libraries have initiated a push to increase literacy rates among children, and have tried to identify what factors effect reading ability. Much of it pertains to home life and low income.

**Evidence:**

1. “Because kindergarten and first-grade classroom s focus on letters, sounds, blending, and

word recognition skills, these students [who have difficulty with oral language development] face incredible hurdles. In turn, if they do not develop alphabetic knowledge and word-recognition skills, they have great difficulty becoming fluent readers. Without fluency, it is impossible to develop effective reading comprehension skills” (Brownell).

1. The role of the parent is crucial, especially in families more prone to poverty: “Parents

should: read to and converse with their very young children to instill the language and vocabulary skills that lead to proficient reading later on; cultivate a joy of learning and a desire for education – and then make sure their children show up for school every day…” (Why Reading…).

1. “Of the fourth graders who took the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

reading test in 2009, 83% of children from low-income families – and 85% of low-income students who attend high-poverty schools – failed to reach the “proficient” level in reading” (Why Reading…).

**Argument 1:**

Young readers tend to automatically make connections to their own knowledge about the subject at hand; thus, prompting conversation about background knowledge encourages further associations.

**Evidence:**

1. “When reading a text, proficient readers activate numerous interacting knowledge sources to construct meaning of the message. One of these knowledge sources is schema, which is the stored body of knowledge one already has in memory. Schema theory maintains that reading is an active process, whereby readers construct new ideas and concepts based on their prior knowledge” (Morrison 113).

2. “The more prior knowledge one has stored about a topic, idea, or concept, the easier it is to understand a text discussing that topic, idea, or concept” (Morrison 113).

3. “It seems that children need to be part of the process; they need to speak, to ask and answer questions, to relate the content of the present story to past experiences. The data analysis demonstrates that verbal interaction between child and parent enhances the overall effect of the episode” (Flood 866).

**Argument 2:**

Discussion with peers, teachers, and parents benefits learning because it introduces students to other points of view, engages them in active dialogue, and forces them to defend their own ideas.

**Evidence:**

1. “The discussion web is an excellent activity to promote students’ engagement with text because it allows for the examination of various points of view within a social setting. This comprehension activity encourages students to work collaboratively in small groups and promotes the opportunity for all voices to be heard. It also encourages argumentation of an open-ended question because it requires students to become proponents or opponents of an issue by offering valid reasons in defense of or opposition to the focus question” (Morrison 115).

2. “Allow time for class and home discussion after reading a story. Thoughts, hopes, fears, and discoveries are aroused by a book. Allow them to surface and help the child to deal with them through verbal, written, or artistic expression if the child is so inclined. Do not turn discussion into quizzes or insist upon prying story interpretations from the child” (Trelease 108).

1. “I think scripted programs are problematic because they do not encourage teachers to engage

in the behaviors of outstanding classroom teachers. If there is one important message I have learned from exemplary classroom teachers, it’s that they incorporate strategies instruction and other effective approaches into their ongoing teachers…You never see these teachers following a script; they are consistently responsive to children’s emerging literacy needs” (Brownell).

**Argument 3**

The type of text used for reading with children is very important to how valuable the reading experience will be. The most effective text is one that is slightly above the child’s current reading level to promote more sophisticated thinking.

**Evidence:**

1. “Texts that are effective for developing language and comprehension ability need to be conceptually challenging enough to require grappling with ideas and taking an active stance toward constructing meaning. The point is that young children can handle challenging content” (Beck).

2. Books where “the linguistic content was primary – that is, the book did not rely too heavily on the pictures for communicating the story” (Beck) are most beneficial

a. Pictures, though at some times helpful, are more often than not a an easier way for

children to explain the context of the book, rather than focusing on the reading experience.

b. “During our observations we became very aware of how children often ignored the

linguistic context and relied on pictures to respond to questions about a story” (Beck).

3. “Teachers should consider the instructional goals of the read-aloud when selecting books. For example, alphabet books are excellent for teaching about letters, and storybooks are useful for developing vocabulary. Informational books can help children develop content knowledge and enhance their motivation for reading. Word play books are useful for developing metalinguistic abilities such as phonological awareness” (Lane 669).

**Works Cited**

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